

# Measure rainfall

The tiny water droplets and ice crystals that form clouds may eventually grow into bigger raindrops and snowflakes. When these get heavy enough, they fall toward the ground. The snowflakes often melt on the way, turning into rain. Rainfall is measured in inches or centimeters using a rain gauge, and it is easy to make your own.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Large, clear, straight-sided plastic bottle
- Colored tape
- Handful of pebbles
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Water



Ask an adult to help you cut off the bottle top.



**1 Cut the top** off the bottle at the point where the curved "shoulders" join the straight sides. Try to make a straight cut. Save both parts of the bottle (you can throw away or recycle the cap).



**2 Put the pebbles** in the bottle. Stick some tape to the side of the bottle above the pebbles. Add water until it reaches the top of the tape.



**3 Turn the top** section of the bottle upside-down, and insert it in the lower section of the bottle.



## RAIN AND SHOWERS

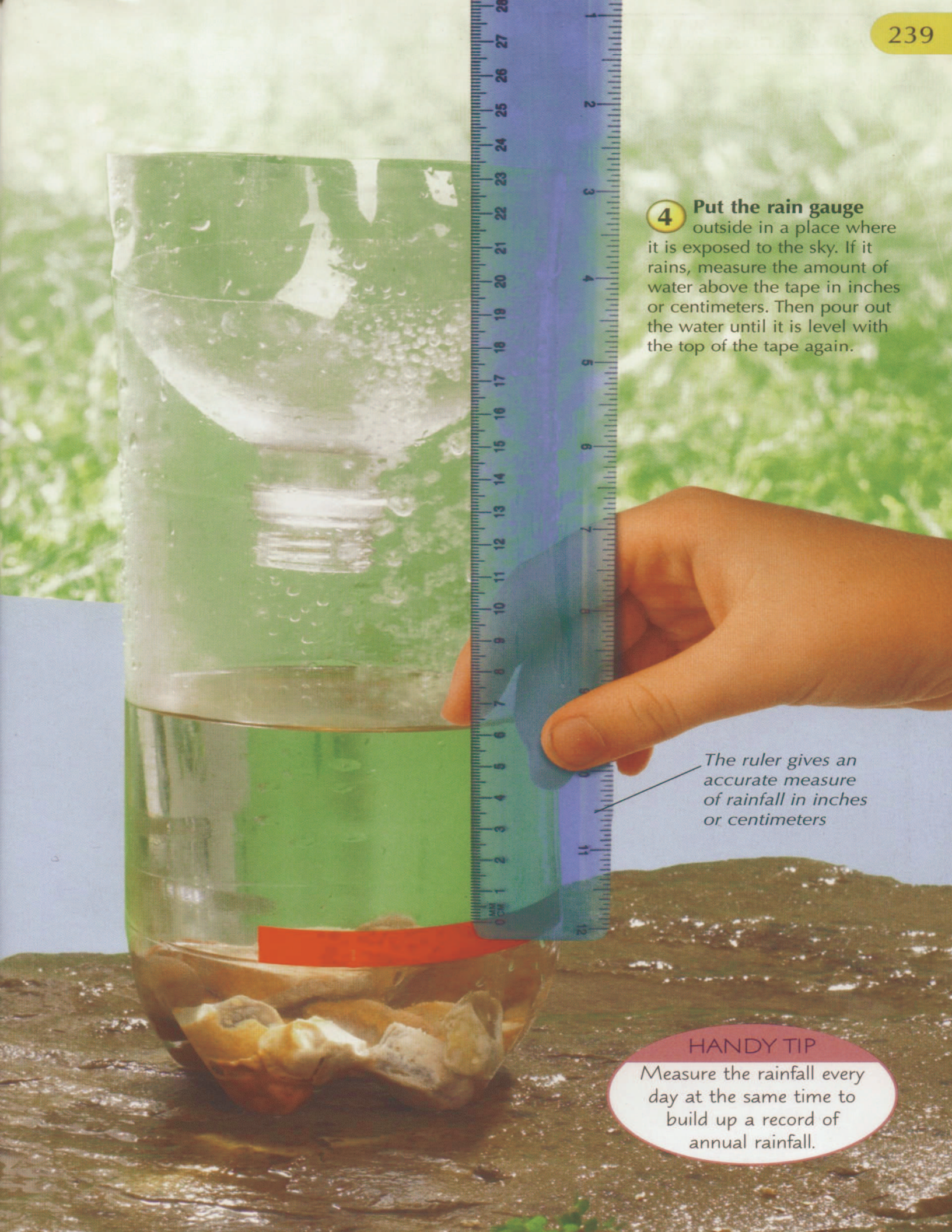
Rain often falls over small areas at a time. Weather forecasters call this type of rain a shower, even though it may be fairly heavy. Showers travel across a country, so they don't last very long in one place. The steady rainfall caused by broad weather fronts also travels across a country, but it extends over such a large area that it can keep falling all day.

### Distant rain ►

You can often see local showers falling in the distance. The rain looks like gray or silver streaks falling from the dark rain clouds.





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- A photograph showing a hand holding a blue ruler vertically next to a clear plastic rain gauge. The gauge is partially filled with water, and the water level is being measured against the ruler. The background is a blurred green field.
- 4** Put the rain gauge outside in a place where it is exposed to the sky. If it rains, measure the amount of water above the tape in inches or centimeters. Then pour out the water until it is level with the top of the tape again.

*The ruler gives an accurate measure of rainfall in inches or centimeters*

#### HANDY TIP

Measure the rainfall every day at the same time to build up a record of annual rainfall.